

**MINUTES**  
**ST. JOHNSBURY SELECTBOARD**  
**SPECIAL MEETING**  
**THURSDAY, JANUARY 20, 2011**  
**6:00 PM – MUNICIPAL BOARD ROOM**

The St. Johnsbury SelectBoard held a special Budget Selectboard Meeting on Thursday, January 20, 2011 beginning at 6:00 p.m. at the Board Room in the Municipal Building.

**SelectBoard Members Present:** Chairperson Jim Rust, Bernard Timson, Bryon Quatrini (by telephone), Daniel Kimbell, and Rod Lamotte.

Also present: Town Manager Ralph Nelson, secretary Ida Rainville, Russ Hutchins, Diane Beck, Nancy Cohen, Brian Christman, Gary Lunderville, Robert South, Al Dunn, Randall Northrop, Stacy Perkins, Mike Fortier, Bradley Reed, Lisa Carrera, Tim Persons, Town Clerk/Treasurer Sandy Grenier, Joanne Brown, Taylor Reed from the Caledonian Record, and Newscenter 7 crew, .

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Chairman Rust at approximately 6:00 p.m. with the Pledge.

**Executive Session:** On a motion by Rod Lamotte, seconded by Bernie Timson, the Board voted to go into executive session at 6:00, and returned to regular session at 6:30.

Jim Rust reported that Bryon Quatrini had participated in the executive session by phone. Mr. Rust clarified some points that were not included on the initial list of directives from the Board to Town Manager Ralph Nelson. 1) Making sure funds are available for the Railroad Street Enhancement Project; 2) Assistant to Town Manager (request withdrawn from the Town Manager); 3) Increase salary of Chief Ruggles 6% to put him back in line with Chief Leighton and Public Works Director Dan Scott. Jim Rust explained that in 2010 the Department Heads took a 6% salary cut, which was overturned by the Secretary of State's office for Police Chief Leighton and Public Works Director Scott, because the budgets for their departments had already be approved by the voters. The General Fund was not approved by the voters originally, which prompted the voluntary reduction in salary by the department heads in the General Fund, of which Troy Ruggles was the remaining employee who had taken that cut. On a motion by Rod Lamotte, seconded by Bernie Timson, the Board voted unanimously to reinstate the 6% to Chief Ruggles' salary.

Ralph Nelson corrected previous information published in the Caledonian Record which stated Bryon Quatrini had suggested a 6% raise for Dan Scott. Mr. Nelson said Bryon suggested a raise, but Ralph was the one who suggested the 6%. In executive session, Mr. Quatrini suggested a 3% raise for Dan Scott. On a motion by Daniel Kimbell, seconded by Bernie Timson, the Board rejected the proposed 3% raise for Dan Scott on a vote of 1-3, Kimbell in favor, Timson, Lamotte, and Rust opposed.

Ralph Nelson furnished revised copies of the budget to the Board and to the audience. Several questions from the audience were addressed: The dispatch office projects more revenues because of some increased fees, and the town match for upgraded dispatch equipment is included in the budget.

Jim Rust reviewed the 457 plan re-statement, confirming that it is a 457(b) Plan, and that the IRS requires a re-statement of the Plan every 6 years. It has been 12 years since the Plan for the Town has been reviewed.

Ralph reviewed the budget and some changes that had been applied. Ralph said that Sandy Grenier has been working with Town Auditor Randall Northrop to verify excess revenue from 2010. Based on taxes from last year, the budget for 2011 will be reduced by more than \$300,000 (approximately \$324,558, a 6% decrease from 2010's approved budget). Mr. Nelson pointed out that nearly all of the Board's directives have been addressed and worked into the budget, except for the water department. He still feels the rates will not need to be changed this year with the new budget. Ralph addressed the fact that Peter Whitney will be leaving the employ of the Town as Assessor and the Town will be advertising for someone to work as Assessor in a contracted position. He said Mr. Whitney will probably apply to work as a contractor and advertising for that

position will begin as soon as possible. On the matter of two people being cut from the Public Works Department, Mr. Nelson indicated this may be done by retirements and he will be meeting with Dan Scott and the two individuals on Friday. If the cuts cannot be done through retirement, then two men will have to be laid off.

Information on the proposed bond votes will be warned for the January 24 meeting. Mr. Nelson pointed out that he had made adjustments to the Manager's office budget after removing the assistant position. Funds were moved to contracted services that may be needed to cover special projects.

Town Clerk/Treasurer Sandy Grenier was asked to comment on her proposed budget, including the division of Clerk and Treasurer. Sandy said she was not opposed to the change, but was unsure how the division will work in reality, since everyone in the office will be working as clerk or treasurer at any given time, depending upon the time of year and necessary projects. Sandy continued to state that she is very concerned with replacing the Assistant Treasurer's position, which is mandated by State Statute. Jim Rust said he felt this would be a year of trial and error during which the budget division would be refined. Joanne Brown asked if there would be some relief for Sandy and her office until March 1. Jim Rust explained that the 2011 budget does not include another member to the office staff.

There was some discussion on identifying clerk and treasurer duties, to which Jim Rust replied that the clerk's duties are specified in state statutes, as well as the Town Charter. Treasurer duties are a bit more broad. It was agreed that some towns have two positions, some have more than two, and some are divided into financial director/selectboard/manager. All positions are created to insure checks and balances to the town's finances.

Daniel Kimbell pointed out the importance of continuity in the office in the checks and balances, and because the clerk/treasurer position is elected, people can change on a yearly basis. An assistant treasurer is necessary to maintain continuity.

More discussion centered on Zoning and Economic Development budgets, for which Town Manager Ralph Nelson budgeted contracted services funds. Jim Rust pointed out that some consultants could be hired in conjunction with surrounding towns to save on expenses.

Town Manager Ralph Nelson called Bryon Quatrini to review budget cuts. Bryon asked what the tax result would be for a \$150,000 house with the \$300,000+ cuts. Ralph said it would be \$100 - \$125 less.

On a motion by Bernie Timson, seconded by Rod Lamotte, the Board approved the budget as presented 3-2 (Lamotte, Timson and Rust in favor; Kimbell and Quatrini opposed).

The Board voted to adjourn at 8:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ida W. Rainville  
Executive Secretary